

Decision Memo

Stonewall Falls and White Twister Mountain Bike Trails Relocation

Chattooga River Ranger District

USDA Forest Service -Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests Rabun County, Georgia

DECISION & PURPOSE AND NEED:

I have decided to approve the proposal to construct several reroutes of the Stonewall and White Twister Mountain Bike Trails and to construct the proposed bridges. These projects are needed to reduce maintenance needs, reduce sedimentation from the trails, provide a system with fewer steep grades, and improve user safety. The reroutes will be funded by money provided by the Georgia Transmission Corporation as mitigation for the constructed transmission line through the area. The bridges will be constructed using grants or other non Forest Service funds if this additional funding becomes available.

Listed below are the approved projects:

Trail	Length	Description
Stonewall		
1	110 ft	Short section that eliminates two steep climbs and a turn.
2	230 ft	Reduces the grade and severity of the turns in this section.
3	480 ft	Eliminates a very steep downgrade with a sharp turn at the bottom.
4	1100 ft	Eliminates 1300 feet with several steep climbs that are hard to maintain.
5	900 ft	Connects the east and west side of the trail to allow more rider options.
4 Bridges		Construct four bridges that would allow bike traffic, but not OHV's.
White Twister		
6	1800 ft	Eliminates a very steep 1100 ft section and one switchback to reduce maintenance needs.

The work may be performed using equipment and it will be necessary to use some type of track-hoe to rehabilitate the sections of trail that are being closed.

The reroutes run through Compartment 85 stand 3; and Compartment 86 stands 4, 5, 6, 7 and 23. These stands are all located within Management Prescription Area (MA) 9H, Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to their Ecological Potential, and MA 11, Riparian Corridors.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

I have determined that this action falls within Category 1 of the Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 31.2 for categorical exclusions. This action has been determined to have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively, and is therefore categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or an Environmental Assessment, but does require the completion of a project folder and Decision Memo.

Based on the results of internal and external scoping, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist that could cause the action involved with this project to have significant effects.

Public Involvement

Eighty-six scoping letters were mailed out on August 17, 2007 to those individuals and organizations that have requested notification of this type of project. Three comments were received during the scoping period, none of which identified any issues or concerns with the proposed project. (Project File).

Findings Required by Other Laws

This action is consistent with the 2004 Forest Plan for Management Prescription Areas 9.H, Management, Maintenance, and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential and 11, Riparian Corridors. This project adheres to the applicable standards and monitoring requirements in the Forest Plan.

This project complies with the seven requirements of 36 CFR 219.27(b) by following the Forest-wide standards as mentioned above. These requirements include goals for the area; potential effects on residual biota and adjacent biota; site productivity and the conservation of soil and water resources; and the desired effects on the environment.

No Proposed, Endangered, Threatened or Sensitive (PETS) plants or animals were present in the project locations during inventories. (Project File).

The biological evaluation completed for this project determined that there would not be any adverse effects on species of special concern. (Project File).

This action complies with the National Historic Preservation Act. (Project File).

A site specific assessment was completed for the project area to identify potential impacts to soil and water resources. No jurisdictional wetlands, 100 year floodplains or municipal watersheds exist within the proposed project area.

This project will be implemented with appropriate erosion control measures for recreation trails: planned and designed to comply with Georgia's Erosion and Sediment Control Act and current Forest Plan standards related to erosion and water quality. This project complies with applicable sections of the Clean Water Act.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(f)

Implementation Date

This project may be implemented immediately. This project is scheduled to begin during the summer of 2008.

Contact Person

For further information concerning this decision contact Allen Smith by phone, letter, e-mail, or in person. The address of the Chattooga River Ranger District office is 809 Highway 441 South, Clayton, GA 30525, and the phone number is (706) 782-3320. Contact Allen by e-mail at asmith02@fs.fed.us.

SIGNATURE AND DATE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

/s/ David W. Jensen
David W. Jensen
District Ranger, Chattooga River Ranger District

June 9, 2008
Date

Stonewall and White Twister Mtn. Bike Trail Modifications

Stonewall - Comp:86 Stands: 4, 5, 6, 7, and 23.
White Twister - Comp: 85 Stand: 3 Quad: Tiger

